

REMARKS

The Final Office Action mailed January 9, 2006 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claim 20 has been editorially revised for clarification purposes. No new matter has been added. Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

In the Office Action, claims 13-16 and 20-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Office Action states that the claims contain subject matter, which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 13 is directed either to the assembly of FIGS. 4-7 or the assembly of FIGS. 13-16. According to the language of claim 13, the second cable connector recited therein is not necessarily mated to the first cable connector. The second cable connector includes a mating end that is adapted to or able to mate with the mating end of the first connector, for example, when the endcap is not positioned on the first connector, as shown in FIGS. 1-3. Furthermore, the endcap itself includes a first end that is designed to be able to mate with the first connector and a second end that is able to mate with the second connector. The first and second cable connectors, however, can also mate with each other in the absence of the endcap as discussed and as shown in FIGS. 1-3.

Claims 20 and 27 recite similar features to those discussed above with respect to claim 13.

Thus, in view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the subject matter contained in the claims is described in the specification sufficiently enough to enable one to make and/or use the invention, and, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 20 and 21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. The Office Action states that in claim 20, it is not clear which connector is referred to in the lines 5-7 since lines 3-4 define that the cable connector comprised of two gender connectors.

Claim 20 has been editorially revised accordingly for clarification purposes. Claim 20 has been amended to recite that the connector referred to in lines 5-7 is a connector of either the first gender or the second gender. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

In the Office Action, claims 22, 23, and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood (US 5,605,468) in view of Fussell (US 5,199,893).

Claim 22, recites, among other things, a cable connector assembly comprising a first cable connector with a mating end and a cable extending away from the connector opposite the mating end, a first protective boot with a connector opening, a cable end opposite the connector opening, and an interior space for receiving the first cable connector, the first cable connector positioned within the interior space of the first boot with the mating end adjacent the connector opening and the cable extending through the cable end, and a first endcap with a first end positioned about the mating end of the first connector, the first end of the first endcap mating with the first protective boot to cover the mating end of the first cable connector, the first end of the first endcap also providing a friction fit with the mating end of the first cable connector.

Unlike the invention of claim 22, Wood fails to disclose or suggest an endcap that mates with the first protective boot to cover a mating end of the first cable connector. The elastomeric sleeve seal 16 in Wood has a central bore that extends all the way through the sleeve seal 16. The sleeve seal 16 in Wood is designed to seal the external peripheral surface of the boot and does not cover the mating end of the connector, as featured in claim 22.

Fussell fails to remedy the deficiencies of Wood stated above with respect to claim 22. Fussell fails to disclose or suggest an endcap that mates with the first protective boot to cover the mating end of the first cable connector.

Thus, for at least the reasons specified above, claim 22 is patentable over Wood in view of Fussell. Claims 23 and 27 depend from and further distinguish claim 22 and are patentable over Wood in view of Fussell for at least the same reasons specified with respect to claim 22.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claim 26 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood and Fussell as applied to claims 22, 23, and 27 above, and further in view of Sopotnick et al. (US 6,065,981).

Sopotnick et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Wood and Fussell stated above with respect to claim 22. Since claim 26 depends from and further distinguishes claim 22, claim 26 is patentable over Wood and Fussell in view of Sopotnick et al. for at least the same reasons specified with respect to claim 22.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

The Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 612-332-5300.

Respectfully submitted,

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